

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMON LIFE

A Book of Devotion

By the Author of "A Book of Prayers written for use
in an Indian College," "The Fourfold Sacrament," etc.



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THE SACRAMENT
OF COMMON LIFE

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MATRI ANTE TRIGINTA ANNOS MORTUAE,
SED DILECTISSIMAE

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

Foreword

IN the practice of devotion it is frequently of help to write down something as a record of the subject of the day's meditation. The writer of these meditations has been urged, by someone in whose judgment he places great confidence, to publish a few such records, and to arrange them in a form which may make them of use to the devotional discipline of others. The records were hastily made in the brief intervals of a missionary life. Some of them were written during a holiday in Kashmir.

In the companion volume (*The Fourfold Sacrament*) the matter has been arranged for each day of the month under the four "Sacraments" of Sonship, Work, Praise and Communion. It is often of help, however, to have a different form of devotional discipline for Sundays. In the present volume accordingly the meditations are arranged for each week of the year under the "Sacraments" of Sonship, of Nature, and of Home-life.

Thanks are due to the editors of the *Guardian* (Calcutta) and of the *Indian Social Reformer* (Bombay) for permission to reprint some of the matter.

J. S. H.

Easter, 1924.

First Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

With Him, in His home,

There is laughter and joy, and a ready welcome for all:

With Him, in His home,

There are merry voices of children at play:

With Him, in His home,

There is genial friendship of kindred hearts:

With Him, in His home,

There is simple abundance of all things needful and good:

With Him, in His home,

There is work, absorbing and hard, to be cheerfully done:

With Him, in His home,

There is rest and renewal of soul, quietness, leisure and
peace:

With Him, in His home,

There are riches of love for the loneliest,

Strong and redeeming and pure,

Triumphant for ever over sin and the grave.

And that home is each heart upon earth

Where entrance is granted to Him.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

STEEL-GREY lies the lake;
Over its dreamy waters a wandering breeze,
Slow-passing, sways gently the reeds by the shore,
And dims the translucent reflection
Of tree and crag and the shadowy mountains.

On high, a broad girdle of fleeciest cloud
Encircles the snow-peak;
Through it the highest pines
Once and again are faintly discerned,
Swathed in its ghost-like vapours;
Above it, the snow-fields gleam,
Virgin-white, inviolate.

Southward, far o'er the vale,
Blue hills are faint to be seen
Through the bands of rain which the soft west wind
Drifts gently before it.

Thus night falls, holy and calm,
Instinct with the stillness of God.

Slowly, from over the darkening waters,
An eagle wings its way home to the crag,
As a soul that wings its way home
To the safety and strength of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

FATHER, this day
For our home we pray Thee—
Our home, which, small and unknown though it be,
May yet most plainly show forth
Thine eternal glory.

May Thy love everlasting
Be reborn in our home this day,

May we take of the sacrament, all day long,
Of Thine own great love in the life of our home.

May we meet with Thee here,
May we know Thee here,
Be drawn very close to Thy side,
See revealed, in mysterious splendour,
Incarnate once more upon earth,
Thy life, Thy love, in our home this day.

Father, we pray Thee,
Give us grace for this highest and holiest task,
To build up a perfect home-life,
That shall give to Thyself, the Omnipotent God
Power to create, through weak human lives,
Thine own perfection of love.

Second Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FATHER Thou art, and more than Father,
Friend Thou art, and closer than Friend,
Lover Thou art, yet dearer than Lover:

Thy glory shines in the uttermost stars,
Yet here in the narrow bounds of a human heart
May it blaze full-splendoured,
Revealing unspeakable joy,
In communion of soul with Thyself.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

SOFT falls the rain on the river,
A thousand pattering drops, with their tiny rings,
That spread, and are mingled, and lost.

Low on the hills the great clouds brood,
Hiding all but the lowest bastions
With a curtain, restful and dim,
Whereunder they sleep.

Swift and silent the river
Hurries, with blind irresistible impulse
To its home in the sea,
As the soul of man yearningly hastens
Home unto God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

LORD, Father,
Teach us to love in perfection:

Lord, Father,
We yearn, we aspire,
For a love that is Thy ideal of love.

Lord, Father,
We know that this is Thy will,
That human hearts should attain the divine perfection
of love:
Then grant us Thy grace and Thy power to attain there-
unto.

Lord, Father,
As the years pass on,
May never a heartless word, never a shadow of careless
self-pleasing,
Stain this Thy most perfect gift, the power and the
scope to love:

Lord, Father,
Teach us to reverence love,
To prize above all things in heaven and earth
The stainless beauty of love:

Lord, Father,
Teach us to live our lives in this love.
For this is eternal life:

Lord, Father,
Be incarnate in this our love,
Day after day be incarnate
To save Thy world through our love—
In strange mysterious workings that no man shall guess,
To save Thy world through our love.

Third Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

THEY tell us of systems and rites,
Of schemes of redemption, philosophies, dogmas, and
creeds;

But how can faith deal with dead things
In a world where are mountains and forests and stars,
Children's laughter and love, and the touch of God's
hand?

Faith is vivid and living and warm,
Faith is friendship with Thee.

Not from books and authority, pedants or priests,
Cometh faith, but from life lived with Thee,
O Master divine,
From the joy of the friendship of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

HERE, on the wide and desolate moorland,
Alone in the silvery moonlight,
And afar from the dwellings of men,
We will worship the King.

The day, with its tyrannous heats, is behind us,
The glare of the sunlight is gone:
The Indian night, in its magical beauty,
Has granted us coolness and peace.

O Master and Friend,
Who makest it all, Who indwellest it all,
Whose splendour and power divine
Are revealed in it all.

Who lovest our souls, as a mother her child,
Yet a thousand times more,
Take this service of peace and delight,
Take the happy thanks of our hearts.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

MASTER,

Till we are old and wrinkled,
Keep us one heart, one soul:
May our love, Thine unspeakable gift,
Grow from year unto year,
Ever more perfect,
Ever more surely based in Thine own great love,
Eternal and changeless, yet sweeter and stronger for ever.

Master,

Here are our hearts for Thyself,
Make them one in Thyself:
May they build for Thee, in Thy needy world,
A fortress of love,
Whence in secret and hidden ways
Shall go forth through the world Thine invincible armies
of love,
To beat down wrong and hatred and shame,
And to build up Thy kingdom.

Master,

Here, in this love of ours, God-given,
We set in Thy hands a tool,
A weapon, which well Thou knowest to wield,
Keen, sharp, moulded aright to Thy master hand,
The weapon, sovereign, divine, of a home.

Fourth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

BÁBAR,

Emperor of Hindustan,

Being caught, with his army,

By a destroying blizzard on the Hindu Kush,

Came at last with his men to a little cave,

But would not himself be safe therein,

Because there was in it no space for his men:

Rather he chose to abide without, in the storm and the
frost,

With those whom he counted his brothers and friends.

So also,

O Master divine,

Thou dwellest not far and at ease in a lazy heaven:

But endurest with us, whom Thou contest Thy friends,

The brunt of the storm,

Bearing all that we bear,

Sharing the toil and the strife,

Steeling our hearts to be strong

By the joy of Thy presence.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

An ice-cold wind
That whips great flakes from the cornice
And sends them spinning
With a tinkling clang, like a fairy-bell,
Down the sheer snow-slope to the north.

Around, a world of snow,
Pierced, near at hand, by a few dark rocks,
The arête we have climbed:
A long black line it stretches below—
Then a gap for the crags we scaled:
Beyond, the eye may follow it down, our arête,
Till it merges at last, a dizzy distance below,
With the long steep ridge,
Where the grass and the juniper struggle for life,
Brown wisps through the covering white.

So down, in successive descents,
Downward the long ridge falls,
Through the feathery birch,
White-stemmed, gnarled and twisted by tempests,
Ever the nearest of trees to the snow,
Past the radiant gentian-beds,
To the pines at last,
To the pointed pines:
Tiny they seem, those pines,
In the deep blue gulf of air:
Yet each a two-hundred foot giant:

Upward they climb, the pines,
Four thousand feet, from the valley,
Where, hard by the grey Liddar-stream,
The stern-voiced, ice-fed Liddar,
Our little encampment stands.

On our own ethereal level, our neighbours,
The snow-veiled, rock-ridged peaks,
Dream in the silence.

Yet it is not utterly silent,
This world of the snows;
For hark, that distant thunderous roar
Is an avalanche, crashing its way resistless
From yon great peak, down its dizzy flanks,
To the forest below,
Whirling the pines in ruin.

O God of this marvellous world of the mountains,
On this airy ultimate throne of Thy glory,
Washed with this lustral profusion of golden light,
We give Thee the praise of our hearts.

Father, our Father,
Who madest it all, art revealed in it all,
In Whom alone we have life, and eyes to behold Thy
glory,
Small and remote on this ultimate summit
We give Thee the praise of our hearts.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

As thou liest asleep,
Little son,
This hot and breathless night,
We drink in thy beauty with long deep draughts.

And we know, as we watch,
That each gracious line and curve of thee,
Rounded so softly, veiled so lovesomely
In the clear warm satin of thy skin,
Is shaped by the chisel of God,
Designed by His own creative artistry.

Never did human sculptor
Carve such perfection of outline and form :
Never did human artist
Devise such delicate blending of tint and texture and
shade :
Never did human poet
Utter in human language a loveliness so divine.

With deep heart of joy
We render our thanks to the Sculptor who wrought
thee so fair,
To the Artist who limned thee so bright,
To the Poet, the Maker, whose master-thought
Created thee thus from the void.

Fifth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

Poor and weak and worthless is my heart,
Stained by sin, harrassed by self-love :
Yet here, even here—ah wonder beyond word and
thought—
Here doth He come to abide.

Ruler is He of all worlds,
Reigning supreme over stars and suns :
Over forest and ocean and hill
He holdeth His dominion absolute :
He may choose His abode where He will.

Yet not afar doth my King choose it,
In the glory of the starlit silent heavens :
He chooseth it not afar,
In the splendour of snow-veiled mountain or the shadowy
depths of the forest.

But here, here in this heart, restless and fickle and
stained—
Ah love beyond belief—
Here in this heart He abideth with me, even with me.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

CLEAR lake-water, thick-studded with starry blossoms:
Far snow-summits, washed by the billowy clouds:
A keen west wind, and racing waves,
That toss our canoe as she shears through the lotus-beds:
Rain-belts sweeping afar and hiding the upland pastures
Where in shaggy bands the wild hill-ponies play:

Ah God, how fair is Thy world,
And how close and joyful and dear
The great warm heart of Thy love.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

OUR Home is a walled city,
A secret city of the hills:
Its ramparts are the Love of God,
And within them we dwell secure.

Here also our King dwelleth,
For thine is that city, O God:
Thou wilt not disdain its crooked lanes,
Its cramped and narrow habitations.

In simple majesty Thou comest
To claim therein Thine own abiding-place:
Here, even here, O Lord of all worlds,
Dost Thou deign to dwell, with us, even with us.

Far away—from our distant hill-top—
We descry the dust from the thronging plains:
Yet here we may dwell at peace with our Lord:
And hence we may issue forth, to do battle for Him.

Sixth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

O HOLY Light of God,
Shining from the beginning,
Guiding our race upward from the brute,
Ever radiant through despair and death,
Ever undimmed and splendid in the darkness,
Shine Thou to-day in this dark heart of mine.

O holy Love of God,
Perfectly revealed,
Incarnate in this human flesh,
Dying for our life,
Suffering eternally our pain and grief,
Striving eternally for our perfection,
Work Thou to-day in this weak heart of mine.

O holy Joy of God,
Sharing the gladness of the least of all Thy creatures,
Rejoicing endlessly in honest laughter, and in gallant
scorn of death,
Taking delight immortal in all sweet human beauty,
Filling the world with the music of brooks and of birds,
Be jubilant to-day in this dull heart of mine.

O Thou great Heart of God,
Beating so closely to my own,
Sharing with me, even with me,
Thy Light, Thy Love, Thy Joy,
I thank Thee for Thyself:
Live Thou to-day in this dead heart of mine.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE silent forest singeth aloud to His name,
Bird and flower, the noonday blaze and the dim-lit
evening,
He liveth in all, and in the glory of all He is praised.

O world most beautiful, most secret and most holy,
World of the open-air, of moorland and snow-crowned
mountain,
Of wide-bosomed heavens and flame-fingered dawn:

O world of His living presence, world of the knowledge
of God—
Knowledge divine, that is neither of sect, nor of creed,
nor of rite,
Knowledge divine, that is living and sure and ineffably
sweet.

O beautiful world, world beyond telling most lovely,
Alone in the dawn, on this wind-washed hill-summit,
I kneel and adore.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

A FRAGMENT of common wood,
Rudely hacked from a rough old plank,
Unplaned, unpolished, misshapen,
Deeply scored with uneven letters—
Yet how dear to my heart,
For on it my little son,
Six thousand miles hence,
With heavy labour of love,
Has cut for me
The one word “Daddy.”

Even so,
On this rough life of mine,
Untamed, misused, and mean,
I would with heavy labour impress
In signs that shall never be lost
Thine own ineffable name,
O Father divine,
That Thy heart may rejoice.

Seventh Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

THOU art our peace, O Lord.
From the thousand wearinesses of our daily life,
From disillusionments and disappointments,
From nervous hurry, from breathless and senseless haste,
We turn to Thee, and are at peace.

In a moment the clamour dies,
The bonds fall off,
The clinging distractions are shaken loose,
And our shrivelled souls expand exulting
In the sunshine of Thy presence.

In a moment this earth-life is behind us,
And we tread the cool, spacious, peaceful halls of Thy
eternity,
Where in quiet content our souls hold converse with
Thyself.

Soon we must return to the labour and the din,
Yet on our brows, we pray Thee, set the seal of our
home,
That home whence we come,
Wherein day by day we live our true lives,
Whither some day we return joyfully for ever—
That home which is Thyself.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

Dear here in the city, walled round by houses,
During all day without narrow bounds
How shall I find him, the Lord of the open air?

Yet remember, beyond there is the forest,
League after league of coolness and of silence,
League after league of the beauty he has made.

"Then come the hills, his hills
Rise against the sunset, downward toward the moon-
light,
Unsign'd in the dawn.

Aye, I will remember
The forest and the mountains,
The great open spaces,
The wind in the trees, and the lonely hill tops.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

A little thing is one match,
Kindled by a casual spark,
Is a tiny ball of red a flame that
Beyond it—Infinitude,
Universe beyond universe,
Eternity, unmeasured, unending.

A little thing is one heart,
That beyond is infinite also.

A little thing on one beach is a house—
A little house here and there, and yet no house day after
day—
Beyond it are the mountains, more than,
The oceans, immensity of humanity,
Unknown and endless, though that is known.

A little thing is a house,
that becomes so close to Heaven.

Yet the love that dwells there
Is not little,
Nor is it bounded by houses.
It is lord of all worlds;
Invaluable is it, and unspeakable.

For Life is but a house-life,
Who is Love.

Eighth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

TAKE this Thy happy child to-night,
Strong Father and Friend.

As the moon tops the poplars
And lights, with her quiet radiance,
The swift-flowing silvery waters,
Where those poplars, even now in the night,
Are mirrored so clear, and with them the distant snows:
Take this Thy happy child,
O dear, dear Father and Friend.

It is time for sleep,
And Thy child comes again to Thy knee,
Sure of a perfect welcome,
Sure of forgiveness for failure,
Sure of a sweet deep sleep,
Safe held in Thy care.

Take this Thy happy child to night,
Strong Father and Friend.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE heavens flame with the splendour of sunset,
Range beyond range, the fiery mountains of cloud
Shine in a wild and passionate glory.

The long low hills to the westward,
Shrouded in forest, mysterious, silent,
Are bathed in effulgence, transfigured.

The last red rays of the dying sun
Pierce direct, from margin to margin, the cloudy
 empyrean,
Sending a signal of triumph over the world.

All of this splendour is Thine, O our God:
Kindle our spirits ablaze with the glory of service for
 Thee,
With the fierce and passionate joy of giving our lives to
 Thy cause,
As the dying sun sets the heavens alight with the flame
 of his death.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

Not a letter,
A score of badly-spelt words,
Stained and smeared,
A poor little fragment of wasted paper,

Yet to me more precious than rubies,
For the writer thereof is my six-year-old son,
And he writes it because he loves me.

Thus also,
O Father divine,
Thou acceptest from us, Thy wayward children,
With joy, this gift of our lives:

Stained and wasted they are,
Yet thou wilt not reject:
For we bring them to Thee this day
Because we love Thee, and would show Thee our love.

Ninth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

MASTER, I daily betray Thee,
Unworthy I am to kneel at Thy feet:
Neither goodness is there nor purity in me:
Nought but disloyalty, meanness, self-serving.

All things lie open to Thee:
Dumbly I show Thee the worst,
All my shame and my sorrowful weakness,
All my baseness and cowardice, failure and folly and sin.

O Master, beautiful, stainless and holy,
Thou knowest it all:
I am Thine, take Thou again
This worthless gift of my life,
Ah! take me again.

Only, O Master, O Christ,
Only, I love Thee so:
O Saviour, O Lover, O King,
I love Thee so.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

LORD is He of the upland world,
Where league after league the forests exult in His splen-
dour,
And the works of man are forgotten.

Here is He known in His might,
Here doth His hand lay hold on our souls in sweetness
and power,
Here are our hearts joined fast unto Him.

Deep and strong and insistent, here in the forest,
No shadow remaining of doubt, nor of darkness and fear,
His love with mastery sure possesseth our souls.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

WARM baby arms round my neck,
A cheek, softer than down, pressed tight against mine,
And a voice whispering gently, "Daddy, I love you so."

A flower of joy art thou,
O my son,
A herald of love divine and the beauty of heaven.

Yet more than this thou art, my son;
For with authority most absolute
Thou teachest me, thy father,
That just as the clasp of thy arms round my neck
And the print of thy lips on my cheek
Thrill me with exquisite unspeakable delight,
So also—a thousand times more—
Doth God Himself rejoice,
When even the least and the weakest of us poor mortals
 His children,
Coming thus quietly unto His arms,
Brokenly tells Him our love.

Ah, if this mean heart of mine
Can thus break with love of thee, my little son,
How vast is the heart of God,
Who loveth each human soul
With a love ten thousand times stronger.

Tenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

O REST unspeakable,
To turn from the clatter and drive of the world
To His peace.

O rest unspeakable,
To relax the strain,
To lay aside all bustling activity,
To repose in His presence again, in His silence and
strength.

O rest unspeakable,
As my soul, set free from this narrow cell,
Lives, and is free:

As I rise at last from this choking fog-bank,
And breathe once more the keen air of His heaven,
Knowing in silence the Truth.

O rest unspeakable,
To come to His knee as a child,
To look up in His eyes,
And to live again.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ALL the earth rejoiceth together,
With a joy unshadowed by pain or by death.

Mountain and swift-rushing stream,
Far lake-water under the moon,
Snow-peaks cleaving the heaven on high,
Sunlight and deep cool glade,
Birds in their free and innocent merriment,
Blood-red poppies that burn in the corn,
The fluttering moth, the deer on the hill,
Aye, and even this heart of mine,
All sing to Thy praise, their Maker and Friend.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

BOTH hands stretched up to the sky,
Where the shade of evening has fallen deep,
My little son, scarce two years old,
Runs forward across the grass
With upturned face and baby clamour of delight—
For even now, for the very first time in his life,
He has seen the stars.

Thus also shall we rejoice, with a childlike delight,
When at last, O Father divine,
We behold the glory of Thy heaven.

Aye, and Thou also wilt share our joy,
More deeply joyful than ourselves.

Eleventh Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

BRIEF is our life,
Neither security have we nor permanence:
Fenced round and about with perils,
Sure-fated at last to be conquered by death:
How wretched we are if our hope is but here.

In Him there is safety and joy,
In Him there is hope, immortal and ever young,
In Him and in Him alone, we know Truth,
In Him alone is the rich delight of this beautiful world.

In Him, and in Him alone, there is Love,
Love which completes and perfects every side of our life,
Love which transforms this changing and fickle existence
Unto a holy and glorious friendship, for ever unbroken,
With all in heaven and earth to whom He has bound our
souls.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ABROAD, on a star-lit night,
With the empty moors around,
And the night-wind softly blowing,
There is Thy palace, O King.

There, in the peace and the beauty of night,
With the silence around,
And the flaming heavens above,
There is Thy palace, O King.

There may our souls know Thee,
Know Thee and worship Thy might,
Rejoice in the touch of Thy love:
There is Thy palace, O King.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

FROM this our joy,
Quiet, unseen though it be,
May heaven and earth,
And all the dwellers therein,
Be eternally blessed.

Nought do we ask for ourselves,
Only that God shall take of our gladness
And share it, a sacrament perfect and holy,
To all of His creatures,
That all may rejoice in Himself.

Twelfth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

OUR souls desire, O God,
Those gifts of Thine
Which are both present and eternal.

Truth we desire,
Which knowing now, we know immortally.

Beauty we desire,
Which seeing now, we see in deathless splendour.

Purity we desire,
Which adoring now, we adore for ever.

Joy we desire,
Deep, quiet, radiant, which shall never die.

Love we desire,
Immortal, infinite,
Perfect even here and now.

A power of self-giving we desire,
Which death shall only make more selfless.

Simplicity we desire,
After Thine own great heart, most childlike.

Courage we desire,
Thy courage, as it dwelt in Christ.

Knowledge we desire,
Eternal knowledge of Thyself.

Aye, Thee do we desire,
Our God, our God:
Thee, Thee do we desire,
And not Thy gifts:
Give us this day
Thyself.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

HOMEWARD, along the lake's dim reaches,
We drive our canoe:

In steady and disciplined lines
The crisp-cut ripples pass us, racing ahead,
And behind us the breeze blows shrewdly down from
the snows.

Purple-black lies the water,
So clear that by day
In the shadowy depths below
The swift-glancing fish and the feathery weeds
Are plain to be seen.

Before us, with crooked flight,
Scarcely discerned in the gathering dusk,
A bat flits hither and thither.

Next, a great owl,
Noiselessly beating the air with her soft-feathered
pinions,
Floats overhead, crossing the new-born stars.

The farther shore, with its stately plane-trees,
Is nought but a low black line,
Not even the white of our tent to be seen.

Then faintly, from over the lakes far vistas,
Comes stealing the sound of a song,
And a vina's thrum:
A lamp gleams, flickering dim,
From a peasant's home.

O moments holy, eternal,
O tender and beautiful heart of our God,
Alive in it all,
Whispering low to our souls
Thy love in it all.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

LOVE is God's gift divine,
It is Himself:

Therefore when lives are utterly given one to the other,
All self-pleasing, all sordid desire, banished a world away,
Each heart taking joy in the other, with a flame of
passionate gladness,
Each yearning, beyond expression, for the highest good
of its comrade:
Then is God born anew upon earth.

Such love is Himself, creating, with power, purity,
beauty and joy:
Such love is Himself, calling forth from the hearts of the
lovers
Every gracious and goodly and heavenly gift:
Such love is Himself, purging the world from its hatred
and wrong,
Founding in mystical fashion His Kingdom
Afar through His whole great universe.
Such love is Himself, undying and omnipotent.

Thirteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

How glad shall we be to lay by,
On that great, dear day when we enter on life,
The wisdom of earth, that is ever more conscious of error,
The pleasure of earth, that is bitter as gall to the
tasting,
The successes of earth, that turn swiftly to dust and
decay,
All this tawdry and threadbare cloak of existence,
All that we have and we are, save the things that abide,
Love given of God,
Simple joy in His beautiful world,
The glad sweet laughter of childhood.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

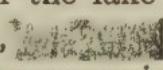
HERE, in the velvet Indian night,
Will we swim for awhile,
Sure-clasped in the silken embrace of the water:

Warm and soft is its touch
As the cheek of a sleeping child,
Cool also it is, delicious and goodly,
After the day's long heats.

Above us the great stars burn,
Huge and passionate and splendid:
Around us the dark hills sleep in their silence,
Instinct with the calm and the power of God.

From afar comes faintly the cry of a bird:
And, see, in the East,
A silvery radiance heralds the moon.

Softly there passes beyond us, and dies,
A tiny breeze from the shore,
Bearing the scent of flowers,
Ruffling the waters but for an instant.

Here in the midst of the lake
Let us lie for awhile, 
Hands under head, scarce a ripple marring reluctant
The faint star-sheen on the shadowy water.

Here, in the midst of our forest-lake,
Let us gaze and gaze
Deep, deep in the lustrous eternity above us,
And know once more
Whence we come, and whither we go.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

SWEET beyond words,
To waken to this new day,
A day wherein we go forward together
Through sunshine or storm,
Over flowery meadows or miry trackless fens,
Rejoicing, whatever betide,
Because we have God and each other.

Sweet beyond words,
To face the wide future together,
To look up together to God,
Together to put our hands into His
For a new day's guidance and grace,
Together to start on this greatest of all adventures,
This voyaging together
Across the uncharted seas of God's new day.

Fourteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

No words have I when you ask me of God:
He is, in Himself, all that my hungry soul craves,
All the beauty, the goodness, the truth and the joy of
the world,
Summed up in a heart that beats here by my own.

He is my Captain, generous-hearted and true:
He is my King, swaying the stars by His word:
He is my Hero, who gallantly goes to the fight,
Against desperate odds, for purity, justice and truth.

He is my Friend, the desire of my heart,
Merry, companionly, staunch,
Faithful till death, and beyond.

The Light of my life is He,
The Joy of my soul:

Yet what are these foolish words?
How can mere words show one ray
Of God's beauty and glory and strength,
Of the heaven of life lived in Him?

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE night falls swift as we splash through the ford,
And, breasting the slope beyond,
Come at last to the camping-ground:

A few low huts, where the famine-folk dwell,
The river wandering by, with its silent pools,
And the murmur of rapids afar:

Around, the desolate plains,
Not a tree breaks their barren expanse:
On the farthest horizon dim hills lift their heads through
the dust-haze:

The sky, so cruel and blasting by day,
Soft-lighted now in the evening, quiet and mild,
Shows the twinkling points of the new-born stars:

In the West, a dull furnace-glow,
Where the Enemy, wearied at last,
Sank even now to his rest.

Here will we stay through the stifling night:
We shall sleep in the open,
The stars for our tent:

But first we will swim together,
A long cool swim,
In the river-pool by the ford,
While the night-bird whistles and calls overhead,
And the fire-flies glimmer and dance in the reeds,
And God gives coolness at last and peace to our souls

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

A CHILD is a flower in the gardens of God—
Not a flower transplanted from heaven to earth,
But a flower growing and blooming in heaven.

To father and mother God grants in His grace,
That, day after day, softly entering that garden of joy,
They may tend and watch and delight in His flowers.

We are children who dwell in the dust and hurry and
noise of the city,
But who daily may run to the quiet and shady retreats
Of the King's own garden:

That there we may tend, in a tiny plot,
The flowers of beauty and love
Which the King has given.

Fifteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

THOU art Sovereign of a universal Empire,
Thy Kingdom knoweth no limit and no end,
Thou shalt reign for ever over the hearts of men,
O Thou who comest very quietly and humbly
To supplicate admission to this poor heart of mine.

O most merciful and beautiful,
Sweetness of life and stalwart Hope in death,
My soul clingeth to Thee as the ivy to the oak.

Sustain me, O Lover divine,
That every moment I may be with Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE strength of the flood, the roll of the thunder, the
crash of the storm-blast—
All these are His own:
The quiet glory of dawn, creating the earth anew,
This also is His.
The rich dark splendour of starlit night, space beyond
glittering space,
The mist on the river, the shadow of clouds on the
mountain, the gleam of the sun-kissed lake,
The song of the birds, the murmur of wind in the tree
tops, the sound of the streams in the night,
All are His own.

In all things lovely He lives and speaks to our soul:
Yet more than in any of these is His glory set forth
In the sweet human love, tender and dear beyond words,
Which so richly He scatters abroad in our life.

Thanks be to Thee, O Lover and King;
May we faithfully serve Thee this day.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

ACROSS the blackness of night
And the leagues of desolate forest
Shineth afar, from an unknown hill-top,
The flame of a beacon-fire.

Across the blackness of space,
Farther than thought can span,
Shineth afar, steady, unfailing,
The flame of a star.

The fire burns low,
Even the star shall die,
But across the waste of the empty years,
Love burns on, eternally,
In God Who kindled it.

Sixteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

DEATH

THE night is gone:
Slowly my soul, at peace,
Opens its eyes upon Thy face,
O God, who art more tender than a mother:
Slowly the knowledge grows in me that this is Thou:
Slowly (as once in days gone by
My mother wakened me)
I know that what seemed pain,
Is but thy morning-kiss:
Slowly my soul responds, awakening gradually.

Then, in a flash,
The knowledge sweeps all shadows of the night away,
I am with Thee, for ever:
For ever one, in Thee, my Home,
With Thy pure company of loving souls.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

BROAD and strong flows the river to the sea:
A week ago there was nought but sand and glare in her
mighty bed,
With a thin little brook in the midst, daily shrinking
away.

But the Rains came in their might;
For a thousand miles every hill, rejoicing in freshness and
leafage,
Sent down to the river its numberless streams.

And now, fifty feet deep, half-a-mile wide,
Banks far overflowed,
The Mother exults in her strength.

Silent is she in her strength,
No thunderous roar comes up to the ear:
To the eye there is nought but a level expanse of quick-
gliding waters,
Racing past and away, swifter far than a man may run
on her bank,
Whirling here the trunk of a stalwart tree,
There the roof of a house,
Relentless in steady determined power.

Even so is the Will of God,
Deep and broad, silent, swift and omnipotent.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

TRUE love is born and exists
In a realm beyond this world,
In God Himself.

In God, and in God alone,
When our souls are silent before Him,
Can a voice, a caress, that is not of this earth
Make fitly known this fulness of imperial joy.

Therefore let us be silent before Him,
For in Him alone is the full and perfect expression
For this our delight.

Seventeenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

EAST and West men strive for their rights,
Men hunger for freedom:

Yet Thou, O Friend divine, art in truth the only freedom
for man,
The only right, inalienable, of each human soul,
The only loyalty for all mankind,
The one home-land.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

You deny the existence of God?

Look forth on those forest-clothed hills,
Hark to the song of the birds,
Gaze up at the stars in the night,
Hear the call of the children at play.

Why, the world is resplendent with God:
His glory cannot be veiled:
Through the garment of matter it shines,
As the sun through a curtain of cloud.

Man needs but the listening ear,
But the eye that is willing to see:
With these he shall know and be glad
In the living assurance of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

STRONG Friend and Guardian of our weakness,
How shall our hearts thank Thee
That we do not need to understand—how could we?—
The subtleties of men's reasoning about Thee
In order that our hearts may understand Thyself:

How shall we thank Thee
That Thou art tenderest and dearest
To those who, humbly and in childlikeness,
Confess they have no words, no formulæ, no theories
concerning Thee,
But only an intense and vivid joy
In Thy great love.

Eighteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

WHO shall divide us from Him, our Home:
Though we plunge in Hell,
Wallowing deep in shame, in lust, and in pride,
Yet is His arm ever ready to save and redeem.

Strong and faithful is He,
Strong and faithful, and very patient:
No treachery can thrust Him from us,
No forgetfulness offend,
No baseness can disgust Him with us,
No filth appal.

Ever the same is He;
He worketh steadily on:
And, in the end, His purposes shall triumph,
His Kingdom shall come,
His Will shall be done in us, even in us.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

MILE after mile of green forest-wall,
Close hedging the road:
Mile after mile of cool leafy glades,
Lavishly spread with the fresh green grass,
Where a fortnight ago was a scorching desert of stones.

Mile after mile the glad songs of the birds,
The merry chatter of parrot and jay,
The long curving leap and the shout of the monkeys,
Each creature rejoicing aloud in life renewed
By the cool green wealth of the Rains.

Mile after mile of feathery boughs
Waving in joy of the strong wet westerly gale,
Mile after mile of soft low clouds overhead
And of heaven-sent misty showers,
Where a fortnight ago was the brazen glare of the hot-weather mid-day.

Mile after mile of the goodness of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

FAIR art thou,
Little son,
As the radiance of sunrise
Reborn at last, over a gloomy world of storm and night.

Fair art thou,
Little son,
As when the dawn-light sets ablaze
Some lonely peak of the Himálaya
Ringed round with glaciers and icy crags,
Till, heralding the day, it beckons from afar across the
murky plains.

Fair art thou,
Little son,
As when, in some hidden valley of Kashmir,
The summer breezes scatter cherry blossoms on the dewy
lawns.

Fair art thou,
Little son,
As when, above our forest-camp,
The autumn moon swims slow and stately and resplend-
ent.

Thy beauty shall die and be dust,
Yet shall it live for ever;
For God's hands made it,
God's Will fashioned it,
And the work of God endures eternally.

Nineteenth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMON LIFE

FATHER, we thank Thee, this day,
That having Thyself, we have full and joyful assurance
That the best is for ever ahead,
That the joy of the future is more than the joy of the
past,
That Thy presence shall teach us to grow, day by day,
In love, in courage, in strength,
For ever becoming more like to Thine own great pattern
in Christ.

We thank Thee, that having Thee,
And being for ever held fast in the grasp of Thy love,
There can be, for us, no despairing failure,
Though our work may perish,
No darksome horror of oblivion,
Though our names be lost and forgotten.

For in Thee, and with Thee,
There is Life, Immortality,
Triumph at last, and perfection of Joy,
So that the feeblest and weakest and worst
May be saved and be stalwart for Thee, for ever.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

At the end of a week of rain,
A week of darkness, gloomy and drowned and black,
The clouds have lifted at last,
And the sun breaks through.

Afar are the mighty Hills,
Thus seen at length after many days:
Clear-cut they shine on the azure heaven,
Their snows white-gleaming as never before.

Hark, how sweetly the birds rejoice,
Greeting the Sun with exultant shouts,
Darting from tree to tree in ecstatic bliss,
Towering aloft, or sweeping in swiftest flight down the stream.

All God's creatures are glad:
The flowers lift up their faces again,
And the trees, resplendent in fresh-washed green,
Are fair new fanes set up to His praise.

So also my soul
Rejoices anew in Thee, O my King,
Rendering deep-felt thanks
For the manifold gifts Thou hast given.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

A home
Is the armoury of God
In His battle to the death with evil, cruelty, lust.

A home
Is a tool to be used by God
In His own mysterious working,
To bring friendship and joy to the lonely and despairing,
To lift off loads of grief,
To block the mouth of Hell,
To fling wide the portals of Heaven.

A home
Is a treasury of God
Wherein purity, beauty and joy
Are stored, for His purposes, inviolate.

A home
Shall be potent
Through the world and beyond it
To scatter abroad the love and the knowledge of God.

For a home
Is in itself the triumph of God,
Banishing Night and Chaos and Necessity,
Indwelling this lifeless clay
With the spirit divine of freedom and joy,
Overcoming to all eternity
Evil with Good.

Twentieth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

VERY close around us is that world of beauty and peace:
Look but inward, my soul, and there thou shalt find it,
Day by day thou shalt dwell therein, with deepest
fulness of joy.

Very close around us is the clasp of God's love:
Be but silent a moment, my soul, and thou shalt feel
Him:
Strong and tender are His arms,
And safe in His strength Thou shalt rest in the perfect
love.

Very close around us is the Living God,
Thou hast but to trust Him and take Him, my soul:
Free and unfailing His grace reacheth out to those that
will have Him,
To lift them from death into life.

O trust Him and take Him, my soul:
Live in Him, love Him, rejoicing:
For so thou shalt gladden His heart, and bring in His
Kingdom.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

BLUE lake-water,
Through the vivid green of the poplar-trees:
Pink wild-roses, down by the golden sand of the shore:
Blood-red poppies ablaze in the yellow corn:
Beside our tent a bank of blue iris,
And the dark green couch of their leaves.

On high, the dazzling snows of Kashmir,
And beneath them the black rock-ridges,
Crowned with their sombre pines.

Along the lake-margin
A kingfisher flashes, blue wings, yellow bill,
Orange breast:

Over all, the deep blue dome of the sky.

In all this profusion of colour, this wealth of beauty and
joy,
Thy praise is proclaimed, O Father, Thy praise is pro-
claimed.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

Ah the joy,
To turn from this world of pedants and knaves,
Where all a man's labour is wasted and spoiled,
Before it is done,
Yet for the honour and love of the work he must labour
on:

Ah the joy,
To turn from the weary and meaningless round of
routine,
Where a man is so swiftly entrapped and bemired and
lost;

Ah the joy,
To turn from the failures and follies,
To this little home,
Where is bliss beyond telling,
Eternal and deathless reality,
Simple joy,
Love unclouded and white,
And the goodness and friendship of God.

Twenty-first Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

In weakness and fever and pain,
When dumbly a man abhors all that he is and has done,
When a horror of darkness covers his soul:
Then, Redeemer, O then, is Thy strength his stay.

In failure and shame and despair,
When a man is broken and lost,
When his soul knows well that the work of his life is in
vain;
Then, Redeemer, O then, is Thy strength his stay.

In the deep black tides of a grief more bitter than death,
When a man is forsaken, bleeding and torn,
When his soul is shrivelled and seared in the thought of
the years ahead:

Then, Redeemer, O then, is Thy strength his stay.

In the last grim issue of all, when life is a dream behind,
And my soul fares forth alone:
Then, Redeemer, O then, shall Thy saving strength be
my stay,
And beholding the face of death I shall find there the
face of my Friend.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

As the dawn in its splendour renewed
Enlightens the empire of night,
And the world awakes and is glad,
So also our souls are enlightened and glad at His coming.

After the long dark night of doubt and despair,
The Sun is arisen upon us:
His splendour has driven in headlong flight the treacherous mists,
And we live again in His radiant light.

Thus to the Giver and Maker and King
Lift we this morning our tribute of praise.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

WITHOUT, steady thunder of tropical rain,
Strong croaking of frogs,
Shrill calls of numberless crickets:
Black night, starless, abysmal,
Nought to be seen,
Where the light strikes out beyond the verandah-edge,
Save a solid wall of swift-falling water.

Within, a cosy glow,
Dry clothes, hot food,
And, afterwards, music
To lift me clear in a moment
From weariness, failure and sadness
To the wide peaceful realm of God.

God be thanked, God be thanked,
For a home.

Twenty-second Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

AGE after age riseth before Him,
Age after age shall crumble and pass away:
Chivalry and wisdom, gallant self-surrender and devotion,
Vanish and are gone.

In Him alone hath History her meaning,
In Him alone is hope and progress for mankind:
From Him we have come, unto Him we return,
Who is our Home.

Is the strife unavailing?
Nay, for Himself He fighteth beside us:
Foremost He is to dare and to die:
Himself in the wounded He groans, Himself He falls in
the slain.

He is the Captain, He rallies the ranks:
He is the Victor, He heads the assault:
With us and in us and for us He is sharing it all:
And at last we shall triumph with Him.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ABOVE, three hundred feet of sheer rock-wall,
Festooned with a feathery network of fern,
And moist with the silvery rain from a hundred springs.

Beneath, the deep still green of the water,
Unfathomed, dark-shadowed,
Divinely cool.

The ramparts, here where we swim, but six feet sundered :
And on high but a narrow ribbon of fervent light
To show where the midsummer noonday sears and
blinds.

Behind and before, nought to be seen but the curving
walls of the cleft,
And the dreamy waters winding into the shadows :
Nought to be heard but the myriad drip from the walls.

Slowly we breast the water,
Despatching, far in advance, a lazy ripple,
That gently caresses the fern-fronds on either side.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

Ah the joy to return
From the world's base ideals, its cynical follies:

Ah, the joy to return to this fortress, our home,
Stalwartly based on the living rock,
Garrisoned fast by the armies of God,
Four-square to the storms and the fierce assaults of the
foe.

Ah the joy to regain its portal
Sore-battered, far-spent,
Wounded and grimed in the conflict,
To listen at last to the clang of its postern behind:

Ah the joy to be safe,
Where peace and purity reign,
Where my soul has leisure to live,
And to taste again of God's love:

Ah the joy to kneel thus together once more,
To receive from the hand of the King
His free-given treasures of peace and cleanliness and joy,
And to drink at His rich deep fountain of love.

Twenty-third Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

O Thou great Lover of our race,
Thou who hast led us upward from the beast,
Thou who in blood and mire, in conflict and in agony,
Hast struggled ceaselessly, in man for man.

O Thou who sufferest when we suffer,
Who in human strife and hatred
Art crucified again,
Thou who art slain a thousand thousand times
That man may live.

O Thou who dwellest very close to each of us,
Very close to every man in every age:
O Thou without whose presence
We perish in the night,
In this one heart at least
Establish Thou Thy victory to-day.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

(*On the death of a favourite Bull-terrier*)

Old friend,
True friend,
Farewell.

Long years we have chanced it together;
Through fair weather and foul,
In the dull city-round,
On Himalayan snow-slopes,
'Mid the cholera, heat and despair
Of a famine-May
We have fared together, we two.

You never grumbled or shirked,
You were never bored or resentful,
You were ever ready for fun or for fight,
You were gentle and game to the end.

Aye, and you loved me too,
God bless you:
In fever, in grief and in loneliness,
You were a comfort, you were,
Old friend.

Shall not God,
Who is love, courage, faithfulness, loyalty, truth,
Speak to our hearts, and be heard,
In a being like you—
You, whose heart was pure gold,
Whose nature and soul—
Aye soul—
Was compact, through and through,
Of love, courage, faithfulness, loyalty, truth?

Lie peacefully there,
Old friend,
With the lake beneath and the hills above,
And the scarlet poppies around:
Old friend, dear friend,
Lie peacefully there.

No more shall we climb together
Through the pines to the snow,
No more through the forest
Shall we fare forth together at dawn:
No more, in the soft still evening,
Wearied return to our tent.

Aye but I loved you,
Aye but I mourn for you,
God be thanked for you.

Old friend,
True friend,
Farewell.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

AH God,
What must Thine own love be,
When Thou lovest each soul upon earth
With a love as far surpassing in depth,
In passion, in power,
This joyful and perfect love Thou hast set in our home,
As the full deep tide of the flooded Ganges
Surpasses in might the thin parched trickle
Of her summer flow.

Twenty-fourth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP ✓

MASTER,

Our foolish wills are weary with overmuch haste,
Our foolish minds are distracted by overmuch care,
Our foolish souls are sick with overmuch self-pleasing.

Only in Thee is there peace:
Only in Thee is there end to these follies:
Only in Thee can we lose and forget this tyrannous self.

Then rule us this day, O Christ,
Be Thou King of our lives,
Undisputed, imperious, stern:
That so we may dwell at peace, in Thyself.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

TEN thousand feet below us
The Sutlej shouts in her narrow gorge:
No sound of her deep insistent clamour
Reaches us here.

Eastward, soars from the valley,
Glacier-flanked, girt with gigantic cliffs,
Crowned with resplendent snows,
A single perfect peak of the main Himálaya.

Far to the left lie the smoky plains,
Shrouded with stifling dust,
Scoured by the sand-storms of May.

Far to the right lie the ramparts of Tibet,
With the twin red peaks of Lio
Guarding that perilous portal
Where Sutlej has broken her way to India.

Sixteen thousand feet in air we stand;
Yet, amidst these giants,
Our peak is as nothing.

For north-westward, south-eastward,
Summit beyond summit,
They march—the world's supreme mountain-range.

Right in their heart we stand,
These steely and terrible summits,
These visions of beauty beyond belief,
These dazzling spaces of splendour and light.

Thanks be to Thee,
O our God,
For Thine own revelation,
In these silent and beautiful peaks.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

GOD keep thee this day:
God give thee His spirit of beauty and truth,
That around thee, wherever thou goest,
Loveliness, purity, joy,
May leap into splendid being.

God give thee a spring of immortal gladness,
Ever fuller and deeper:
God guard thee from harm:
God use thee this day for His Kingdom.

God kindle in thee, to His glory,
The flame of His indwelling presence,
That thy life may shine as a star:

God keep thee and bless thee this day.

Twenty-fifth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

DARK is the world without Thee,
For all things decay and are changed.

But with Thee

There is neither fear nor darkness nor death,
Only a sure-set trust in that which is staunch and abiding,
In that which is ever more joyful and lovely and pure.

Thou art our Father, our Lover, our Friend,
We look up to Thy face,
And all things goodly and fair are our own.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

To force your way up crags that have never been climbed
before;

To run out ninety feet of rope
On the sheer cold face of the cliff
Before a belay can be found, and the rope secured
For the next man to follow:
To reach a perilous cranny, beyond a lip of the rocks,
Where you stand alone on the toppling crags,
With nought below but blue air,
And nought above but the bastions of the peaks,
And nought of human companionship
Save the thin down-trending rope:

To gain, after hours of strenuous leadership,
The airy ultimate summit,
And to look forth thence, true monarch of all you can see,
Upon mountain and valley and lake:
This, this, is to quaff
In long deep draughts
The rich red wine of life.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THUS to sit silent together,
The day's work done,
Is very Heaven on earth.

Thus in silence to lift up our hearts,
Till there rises in each,
With knowledge imperious, absolute,
With joy ineffable,
The certainty of God's own craftsmanship
Moulding our souls to a new united being:
This, this is eternal life.

Twenty-sixth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

WEAK and foolish,
Selfish and contemptible,
Mean and repulsive are these hearts of ours,
O our Master:
Yet with all our filth and baseness,
Thou lovest us.

O mystery beyond imagining
Of this great love of Thine:
Take us, O Master,
Take and use us as Thy slaves.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

MILE after mile of mysterious woodland,
Where the monkeys play and the peacocks call:
Mile after mile of coolness and beauty and peace
Till the heart is drugged with delight:
Mile after mile of soft clouds overhead,
Of bands of rain on the forest,
Of sweet-scented breeze in our face.

Long curving ascents, at the top
A gap in the forest-wall,
And through it a vista, far seen,
Of deep-bosomed hills, splashed here and there with the
sunlight,
Of winding rivers that gleam in the valleys,
Of tiny green fields by the forest-girt hamlets:
A goodly land, and a fair,
The land of Seoni.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

No words are there to be found, for ever,
For the things that truly exist,
Nothing but fruitless gropings after expression.

No words are there to thank God for the joy He has
given,
No words to set forth His splendour,
No words to speak of this fair revelation of Him
In the wonderful world He has made, and in sweet
human love.

Here in the silence of evening,
Our souls wide-opened to Heaven,
We will kneel, and pray for His grace,
That, where words are foolish and meaningless,
Our lives may speak of His matchless love.

Twenty-seventh Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

BEAUTY is a thought of God.

Each fair human form, each flower, each bird,
Is the latest and best of God's triumphs
In the long hard labour of creation—
Is His last and most skilful craftsmanship
As He clothes Himself and His glory afresh
In that which is fragile and mortal,
Yet is eternal;
For the thoughts of God never die.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

BITTER cold, freezing a man's very life,
Dark rocks around,
And above a few steely stars:
The querulous note of a half-wakened bird,
Faint heard from the forest below,
And the breath of a wind chill as death.

Then,

By the sudden stroke of the finger of God,
To the East a red glow,
And against it, faint-seen,
The keen saw-edge of the giant Himálaya,
Black, desolate, and terrible.

To the West, a dimness,
A glow,
A flame,
A splendour of molten gold,
As Everest takes the dawn.

Soon,
East to West,
The northward horizon, from end to end,
Shines with a glory of rose-crested peaks,
The mightiest in the world—

Thus God is revealed once again.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

As thus our fingers touch the satin of thy skin,
Baby son,
Fondling the soft warm bloom of its perfection,
There thrills through us—
How we know not—
A glad knowledge of ideal beauty
More clear even and complete
Than any that is given through the gate of eye or ear.

Twenty-eighth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

GENEROUS-HEARTED is He:
Out of the mire of failure and shame
He rescues and cleanses the soul.

For remorse He gives joy in Himself,
For loneliness, friendship and love,
For sadness, laughter and peace.

Gracious and fair is His world beyond telling,
Strong and tender and perfect His love
Filling the heart with a quiet unspeakable joy.

O Master, how shall we thank Thee?
Only as children we kneel at Thy feet,
Bringing the gift of ourselves.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE TAXILA

BARE hills around
Darkening fast as the evening falls:

Here in the valley,
With the stream softly calling below,
A few ruined walls—
A palace once—
Deserted, silent, mouldering to dust:
An ancient stairway, dinted deep,
Some scattered fragments of mosaic,
And a broken shrine.

That is all:
Yet turn not hence disdainfully away,
For these poor shattered halls
Were once gay-decked
To welcome the all-conquering Macedonian:
These crumbling stones
Were trodden by those wingéd feet,
And on these brooding hills
Once gazed the eyes of Alexander.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

ANOTHER day has dawned, wherein God bids us live
eternal life,
Shake loose the bonds of time and death,
Step clear together from the iron chains of fate
Into His own dominion, His own perfect home
Of freedom, light and joy.

Another day has dawned, wherein our home on earth
Shall be the foretaste of God's Heaven.

Twenty-ninth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

No sadness is there, nor care,
For those that love Him:
Suffer they may, die they must,
Yet trusting and holding Him,
They are content.

For His love is stronger than death,
More patient than pain:
When my soul shall escape from the final shattering
agony,
Then, ah then, shall He put forth His might,
And make me His own for ever.

Must I wait till that day?
Nay, one thing alone do I need,
That, a little child,
Here and now I may put forth my hand in the darkness,
And be grasped by His love—

Grasped, did I say?
Nay, my soul shall be stormed,
Mastered with strength resistless,
Garrisoned fast by the armies of God,
By immortal and heavenly joy in His love.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

YESTERDAY,

Pursuing a passing motor in the street—
A thing I have often forbidden and punished—
My dog fell, by evil chance,
Beneath a cart, and his leg was crushed into splinters.

I carried him straight to the doctor,
Who stretched him out on a table,
Pulled out the shattered leg to its proper place,
And kneaded the splinters into position.

He bore the fierce pain like a hero,
With never a cry or a struggle:
Only, with great trustful eyes,
He gazed up at me, his master,
As I stood by his side, with my hand on his head.

Even so also, O Master Divine,
When my own time comes,
May I bear my pain like a hero,
Caring only that Thou standest there
Bearing it all at my side.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

PERFECTION of sweet and innocent beauty,
Set, by God's grace,
In frail mortal flesh:

Music of tiny feet to and fro:
Laughter, or April tears:

Each movement, each turn of the head, each step that is
taken,
Each lissome, unconscious posture of grace,
A flash of the radiance of heaven.

Aye, as I see thee, my son,
I rejoice with one glimmering spark of the gladness
divine:

God shares me His joy,
As He looks on the fruit of His labour in thee
And is glad, beholding the beauty of heaven
Thus clothed in the flesh He has made.

Thirtieth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

WEARY are we, very weary,
So that the joy of our lives is gone from us,
O Rest of our souls, our God.

At last the hurry and heat of the day
Are over and gone:
At last, like tired children, we come to Thy arms.

Ah, what instant relief,
Here to take refuge in Thee,
To steep our weary souls
In Thy quiet strength.

THE SACRAMENTS OF NATURE

THY voice is sweet in the song of the birds,
The cloud-shadowed hills and the dreamy forests,
These are Thy home,
O Lover of mine.

I know Thy caress
In the gentle touch of the rain,
In the breeze o'er the lake,
In Nature and Nature's deep silence,
In childhood, and childhood's clear laughter,
In sweet human love,
In music, simplicity, youth.

Close, close is Thy love round our souls,
O Father and Saviour and Friend:
Grant us the strength to go forth,
And to fight in Thy cause,
And to show Thee to men.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

Thus to love and be loved
Is to shake ourselves free, and for ever,
From oblivion, death and decay.

This is the Wine of God,
Strong vintage of heaven,
The draught divine of eternal youth—
We will drink it deep.

With the draught, God's own life,
Which is Love,
Undying shall flow in our veins.

Hence full soon we shall go,
These bodies shall moulder to dust,
Yet in our souls shall the wine of God's life
Be mighty to save, to transfigure, to purge,
To burn and to thrill with new life,
Making us one in Himself.

Let us kneel then to thank Him, our King,
That thus He redeems:
That thus He has given, in bounty divine,
The wine of His Life.

Thirty-first Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

How shall we pray Thee,
O Lord of our life,
For those that are dearer to us than our life?

How but in laying their souls in Thy hand,
As a child his most treasured possession
In the hands of his mother, to show her his love?

Thus we bring Thee to-day these souls that we love,
And we render them gladly to Thee,
The best gift that we have.

And we pray Thee the while, with the trust of a child,
Take them and hold them Thyself:
Keeping them ever next to Thy heart.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

BLUE as the deep mid-ocean are the irises,
Blue as the deep mid-heaven are the irises,
In the rich green grass they stand like stars, innumerable.

Their beauty is an immortal thing,
Eternity o'ershadowing time,
Permanence o'ershadowing corruptibility,
Truth o'ershadowing delusion.

For the life of the Most High God, immortally,
Beats through the dull cold veins of transient materiality,
And wells forth
Into Beauty.

The vehicle of that loveliness shall perish,
The fragile structure of blossom and leaf,
The fair human form,
Even the snows on high shall be melted at last:

Yet their beauty abides for ever,
And ever more truly exists,
In God,
Who is Beauty and Love and Truth.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

MEN yearn for immortality,
For assurance that something of their being
Shall live unchangeably
When they are forgotten.

No man endures to believe
That he is destined utterly to perish—
That all the labour and joy of his manhood
Shall cease for ever with the life he now lives.

Here in this simple home-love,
Loved thus sweetly and potently in Himself,
Taste we here and now
Immortality.

Death shall conquer and claim us,
But never shall death conquer God-given love,
Never shall death destroy the pure and resplendent life
That is lived in God.

Thirty-second Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

ROUND about God,

The busy mind of man piles up the heavy adjectives,
Till He is hidden altogether from our sight—
Omnipotent, all-knowing, absolute,
Incomprehensible, ineffable,
Ruler afar, with all-controlling sway
Of a thousand thousand worlds unknown—
Howsoever thou shouldst know Him,
“Not that, not thus,” they cry, His zealous worshippers.

But nought, and less than nought, care I
For all your adjectives,
For all your small officious zeal,
For all your cheap, high-sounding flattery.

This and this alone know I,
God loveth me, God loveth even me.

Here close His love enfoldeth me,
Here, close by mine,
I feel and know the throbbing of His heart,
The impulse of His strong eternal Will.

Here may I gaze
Up to God’s face,
Finding therein love, sweetness, courage.

For God has claimed me as His child,
His weak unworthy child,
And yet His own.

Aye, God loves me, loves even me,
With love by far more intimate and tender
Than all the love wherewith my mother loved me
When first she held me on her breast.

For this thy truth,
Lord Christ,
Thy full and perfect revelation of God's truth,
This day I thank Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

At darkest midnight,
When the furnace breath of the hot-weather wind shivers
 the parched up leaves,
When the body is wearied and fevered
And the mind distraught,
When sleep is afar,
When each tiny sound
Is a needle to stab me awake,
When the cares and the faults of day
Are magnified thousand-fold,
When I toss to and fro
And yearn for the day,
Yet yearn even more
For coolness and darkness and sleep:

In that dreadful hour of night
Suddenly there shall be Peace:
A Presence divine shall be with me,
The sound of a Voice,
The touch of a cooling hand:
And stilled by Thee, O my Lover, my God,
I shall sleep:

For wherever my need is greatest,
There art Thou nearest, O Father, to help and to save.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THIS artless and simple beauty
Is an eternal thing,
An incarnation on earth of the perfect beauty in heaven:

To guard and cherish such loveliness,
To train in all things goodly and fair
The clear white innocence of childhood,

Daily to care for the needs and the growth
Of body, of mind, and of soul,

Is to share with God the highest of all His labours
The clothing in flesh once more of His own great nature
of love.

Thirty-third Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

IN this Thy new dawn
We come to Thy knees
As children, O Father divine.

And we pour out before Thee,
As children trusting their Father's love,
This aspiration to-day.

Give us Thyselv,
The breath of Thine own pure life
Indwelling our souls;

That, having Thyself,
And with Thee all things lovely and pure,
Our own life may vanish
Lost in Thy love.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

IN the fresh keen morning
Thy world sings aloud, O God, to Thy praise.

Thy glory flashes from forest and hill:
Thy splendour, plain seen in the sunlight, the snow,
The cataract's silvery veil,
Fills all things in heaven and earth with beauty and joy.

This heart of mine, too,
Exults in Thy goodness,
Beholding Thy face in Thy world,
Knowing Thee thus indwelling the whole,
Feeling the surge and the thrill of Thy life in it all,
Tasting Thy love, so personal, tender and close,
Yet so mighty to build up a marvellous structure of joy
and delight.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THE OPERATION

HERE wait I in silence
For ninety slow minutes,
Whilst under the surgeon's knife
Fate is worked out—
Fate, whether that which I love a thousand times better
 than life
Shall die, or shall live.

Fate, said I?
Nay, here as I wait
(My soul gathered and crouched at God's feet
In a long dumb anguish of prayer),
Of a sudden the barriers fall,
The curtain of sense rolls back—back—back,
And is gone:

Still do my eyes look out on the sunlight,
The song of the birds still comes to my ear,
And the slow deliberate march of the clock:
Yet my spirit is lifted clear of it all,
Clear from this fragile and changing world,
Beyond and away.

Around my soul
Lift and strain the tides of eternal life,
Lift and strain, and bear me away:
Around my soul
Thunders in slow majestic rhythm
The surge and beat of Thine endless love,
O Father—
Not Fate, O Father, not Fate, but Thy love.

O Thou, in whom all love
Is born, and for ever lives:
O Thou, who gavest this love,
Who rejoicest for ever in all true love:
Father, whose love for that single soul
Is love for a world of souls focussed and fixed upon one:
Father, upon whose bosom
Lieth that white soul now
(Mind dulled by the drugs,
Body shorn by the knife):
Father, in life and death
To be utterly trusted:
Father, Thy Will be done.

Thirty-fourth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

HERE in the secret place of Thy presence
I meet Thee again this morning,
Father Beloved:

And I thank Thee, with deep-felt thanks,
For all Thou hast done, for all Thine incredible grace:

Give me Thy fatherly blessing,
Let me feel, I beseech Thee, the touch of Thy love on my
heart,
E'er again I fare forth to Thy work in Thy world.

Thou knowest my uttermost shame, my deepest and
blackest failure and sin:
Unworthy I am to come near unto Thee:

Yet here Thou dost take me again,
Dost flood and o'erfill my heart with Thy love, with
Eternal Life,
The knowledge of Thee:

Ah, Father, I thank Thee, I thank Thee,
Make me Thy faithful servant, thy loving obedient child,
All the day long.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

IN the still dim morning
We worship the King.

From afar comes the voice of the wood-doves,
The call of a deer,
The steady drip from the leaves after a night of rain:—

Common things:
But ah how His heart beats through them,
How they flame with the splendour of God:

Each leaf of each tree is transfigured,
Each murmuring voice of His creatures
Is glad beyond measure
With the notes of His joy.

Father, Thy Life
Beats strong and divine through it all:
We need but to listen a moment,
And here is the beat of Thy heart
Close felt by our own:
Here is the voice of Thy love,
Here the shout of Thy triumphing love
Loud, loud in our ears.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

As I watch thee lying so quietly there,
Sweet flower of joy,
Pale and thin,
Very weak,
Yet thy strength returning each day:

I can scarce believe that the dark, cruel shadow is past,
That I have thee again:

God be thanked,
God be thanked,
That He saved me from *that*:

God be thanked,
God be thanked,
Who has given thee back:

May our life,
Thus restored and renewed by His grace,
Be used, as a single tool,
Meetly shaped to His hand,
For His work in the world.

Thirty-fifth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

O HOLY silence of our God,
When our souls, very joyfully forgetting
The distractions and fretful cares,
The hopes and the fears of earth,
Return to their home,
And are straightway at peace.

O holy and blessed silence,
When, laying aside these petty and foolish lives,
We live in Him:
When our souls, deep drinking the joy of God's Heaven,
Put off age and decay,
Put on immortal and splendid youth,
Beauty incorruptible,
Life eternal.

O Father, grant us Thy grace,
That day by day, till our half-life on earth is over,
We may take from thy hands
This joyful and perfect sacrament of silence.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

SLOW drips the rain from the roof,
And the dawn comes tardy and dull
Curtained with sombre mists.

The grasses, the flowers, the trees
Are instinct with a quiet and tranquil content
In God's good gift of the rain.

Coolness and greenness and generous rain—
Ah what a heaven they make
In this burnt-up, waterless land.

So to my heart, O God,
Sweet beyond word and thought
After weariness, loneliness, pain,
Cometh the touch of Thy presence.

My soul awakes,
It arises, it lives:

The joy of Thy generous love
Beats through my narrow and darkened being,
Till all is transformed by Thy grace,
Till my heart expands to salute its Lover, its God,
To resign itself into His hands,
To live with Him, even here on this earth
· That life which shall never decay.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

Health after deadly sickness,
Hope after dark despair,
Laughter from sorrow,
Love out of loneliness,
Life out of death.

I thank Thee, my God.

By Thy grace
May the health endure, I pray:
May the hope grow ever more sure,
The laughter more care-free,
The love more perfect,
The life more wholly Thine own.

Thou hast healed and restored,
Dear Father,
Our hearts' deep thanks unto Thee:
Rule Thou and use us afresh.

Thirty-sixth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

HEART of love,
Close beating here by our own:
Heart so human, so familiar,
So comprehensible to those that love:

Heart of rest and comfort,
Heart where our spirits are at home
In sweet serenity and peace:

Heart of our most tender and most loving God,
Whose might omnipotent controls the stars,
Whose will unchanging sways the Universe,
(Yet what are these high-sounding attributes
Beside this only that Thou lov'st our souls,
Lov'st even us?):

Ah! heart belovéd and divine,
Sustain us, all this day,
With Thy great love.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ABUNDANCE of rain at last:—
Thank God for the life-giving torrents,
For the pools by the road-side,
For the grass new-springing,
For the leaves with their vivid freshness,
For the chorus of frogs at night,
For the thrust of the rain-soaked wind through the forest.

Thank God for the lakes filling up,
For the wells, that were dry,
Now at last overbrimming,
For the coolness, the mist, the glare of the sunlight
tempered and dimmed,
For the free new joy of flower and bird,
For life restored after dust and death,
Thank God for the Rains at last.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

OUR hearts turn straight unto God this morning,
Rendering thanks, from the depths of our being,
For this perfect, eternal gift He has given,
In our home,
Redeeming, rejoicing, uplifting our souls unto heaven.

O Father,
We thank Thee, we thank Thee, for all Thou hast done:
For this sweet and simple home-love
Ever more sure and safe in Thyself:

Shower Thy gracious blessing
In wealth of generous love on these Thou hast given:
Keep them safe by Thy care from danger and harm and
disease:
Crown each of their lives with beauty and joy:
And teach us—ah, Father, teach us—
To love with a perfect love.

Thirty-seventh Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

THOU hast but to listen,
And thou shalt hear Him:
He speaketh aloud in the wind of evening,
In the joyful gladness of children, the song of the birds.

In the dayspring upon the forest
Is His face clear seen.

Aye, and in the darkness,
In the black and dreadful midnight,
Stretch forth thy hand,
And thou shalt clasp Him.

Round about His Love encompassing
Hour by hour sustains thee.
Thou hast but to be silent:
Thou hast but to receive—
With simple-hearted trust—
The boon ineffable, immortal,
Which He is waiting to bestow.

Oh, be still, my soul,
Receive Him:
And even here and now
Thou shalt know eternal life.

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THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

FOR water to swim in,
For the green forest-freshness,
God be thanked:

But, above all else,
God be thanked for the mountains;
For the great, white, terrible, beautiful mountains
God's name be praised.

For there, on the white mysterious mountains,
God's Presence walks, and His Spirit is known,
With a keen and piercing assurance, in wonder and awe
and a trembling joy,
That are strangers to him who only may walk in the
valleys,
In the warm, safe, bountiful valleys.
God be thanked for the mountains.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THERE is neither word nor expression in human tongue
For the joy of simple home-love;

Without it, a house is a barren waste,
Hard work, harder words from morning to night;
With it, the meanest of huts is the portal of heaven,
An abode of peace and of joyful delight,
Of beauty and laughter and song;

Without it, gloominess, ugliness, squalor:
With it, the happy friendship of heaven.

Thirty-eighth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

CHRIST, for those men we pray,
To whom we shall speak of Thyself this day, in word or
in deed.

Take our weak and foolish and faltering words,
Take them and wing them with power,
Power to paint Thy glory,
Thy beauty, Thy love.

Speak, ah speak, Master Christ,
Through our stammering deeds this day,
And claim for Thyself
These souls Thou hast made for Thine own.

Change the lives of these men,
That henceforth they may live unto Thee,
Fast held in Thy love.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE night falls fast.

Ahead shines a radiant sunset,
Clouds black-dark,
Through them swift-thrusting, lances of roseate light:
Beyond, where the long blue hills have caught and
 hidden the Sun,
Faint-seen banners of gold and scarlet,
Dipping and rising afar, as in some great fight.

In the valley resounds, through the silence of twilight
The steady and sonorous roar of the cataract:
The lake is still as a mirror, a molten ocean of gold.

All things are filled with a beauty divine, surpassing
speech or belief,
Instinct with the presence of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

WHEN our hearts are torn by bitter anxiety,
O God, be present in Thy strength,
To heal, to save, to restore.

When our home is desolate and lonely,
O God, be present in Thy love,
To heal, to save, to restore.

When the black dire shadow of loneliness and loss
Settles in despair upon our spirit,
O God, be present in Thy comfort,
To heal, to save, to restore.

In Thee alone do we live:
On Thee day by day our souls depend:
Apart from Thee we have no life, no being for a moment.

O loving, mighty Father,
Be present in Thy love, Thy power this day,
To heal, to save, to restore.

Thirty-ninth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FATHER,

Our hearts yearn after Thee this day:

Our hearts cry out for Thee,

Nor cry they in vain:

For here, as we wait in the silence,

Thy love floods in, a resistless sea,

And our souls are o'erwhelmed, subdued in joy,

By the knowledge of Thee.

O Father, dear Father,

We thank Thee, we thank Thee, for this Thy great love:

All the day long do Thou keep us and hold us,

And show us how best we may serve Thy Kingdom.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

As the quiet, persistent rain,

Soaking the ground with beneficent moisture

Brings life and freshness and joy to all living things,

So Thy grace,

O God of all love,

Sinks deep in our hearts

Bearing fulness of life and of joy.

We thank Thee,

Our Lord, for Thyself:

And we pray Thee for strength

To work for Thy cause this day in Thy world.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

TEACH us, O Father,
To trust Thyself with life and with death—
And (though this is harder by far)
With the life and the death of those that are dearer
to us than our life.

Teach us stillness and confident peace
In Thy perfect will,
Deep calm of soul, and content
In what Thou wilt do with these lives Thou hast given.

Teach us to wait and be still,
To rest in Thyself,
To hush this clamorous anxiety,
To lay in Thy arms all this wealth Thou hast given.

Thou lovest these souls that we love
With a love as far surpassing our own
As the glory of noon surpasses the gleam of a candle.

Therefore will we be still,
And trust in Thee.

Fortieth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

BLIND are we,
Blind from our birth,
Our eyes are darkened and dulled by the mists of
the world.

Yet shall we see,
O ye that have eyes at last, we shall see:
And the first that we see,
The first that ever our eyes shall behold,
Is the first that ye saw—
Is Thy face,
O Lover, O King,
Is the kingship, the love in Thy face.

We thank Thee, O God,
That for Thee is our sight reserved, set apart,
It is holy and sacred, for Thee alone.

O God, we shall see,
We shall open our eyes at last
On Thy face.

We shall see, we shall see.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

AFTER a long dull week of the Rains
The Sun breaks forth to-day,
And in glory transfigures the world:

Each tiniest leaf on the poplars,
Each blade of the long lush grass,
Has its jewelled drops:

All things shine in a strange new splendour,
Thy splendour, O God.

Shine thus in my soul this day,
O splendour divine:

Make me a new creation,
Fill with Thy praise
Each action, each word:

Set me ablaze with a strange new radiance,
So that men may know
How dear and how lovely Thou art, O Father.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

FRAIL is this human flesh,
Easy to be shattered in a moment,
Easy to be wasted by disease,
At the last sure-fated to corruption.

Even as a flower
The lovelier it be is the less enduring,
The more delicate and fragile,
So also is this human flesh.

Beautiful it is beyond all telling,
Gracious, tender and resplendent:
It revealeth to men the beauty and the love of God,
Yet swiftly it perisheth in shame.

Swiftly is its beauty but decay,
Its grace, its splendour, change to nameless horror.

Nay: the flesh may perish,
But the beauty is immortal,
The love, the grace, the tenderness
Are eternal things,
For they are God incarnate once again:
And, though the flesh may perish, they endure in God.

Forty-first Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FIERCE burn our hearts this day,
O God,
In love of Thee:
Thou knowest well their fickleness, their shame,
Their sloth, their treachery, and all their sin;
Yet burn our hearts within us, with a keen consuming
flame
Of joy in Thee,
Because of all Thy grace, Thy care,
Thy generous forgiveness of the past,
Thy will that beats, with steady unrelenting power,
To save Thy world and us:
For all Thy grace and goodness, Lord,
Our hearts burn fierce in love of Thee this day.

Yet far beyond all else, O heart divine,
Our human hearts are kindled in a flame of love for Thee,
Because Thou art Thyself:
Because, beyond all human speech,
Adorable Thou art, and sweet, and strong,
Joyful and beautiful and tender,
Heroic, humble, simple, and all-conquering,
In power of love divine.

Ah, Lord,
Here burn in love our human hearts this day:
From this small flame
Kindle Thy world to know Thee and to love.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

CLEAR is the dawn upon the mountains;
Far below, in the mist-shrouded valley,
An eagle, slow-circling alone in effortless flight,
Steadily cleaves his way with majestic power,
Through the blue, empty air.

Faint, from five thousand feet down,
Rises the roar of the snow-swollen torrent:
And above are the steely peaks.

Here in mid-heaven,
With the flanks of the mountain steeply falling below,
And the snow close above,
We may rest for a moment, and know.

We may know the heart of it all,
Feel through it all the beat of the life divine,
Thrill with the knowledge of God
In the beauty and splendour of mountain-dawn.

We may ache, a little as He too aches,
With desire that empty and broken and joyless lives,
In all His world,
May be free, may rejoice, and may know.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

AH, the joy of the knowledge,
In the press of hurry and work,
That here there is peace—
The peace that is heaven on earth,
The love that is God's own life in the world.

Though abroad there is weariness, folly, deceit,
Yet no power have they of harm;
For here, in our home,
There is quiet strength,
Refreshment, sanity, laughter and joy.

Forty-second Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FATHER,

Well I know that, given one trusting heart,
Thy Kingdom comes:

Well I know that, given one trusting heart,
Silently, unnoticed, far away,
Thy Kingdom comes:

Well I know that men shall never guess
Where was the solitary heart that trusted Thee:

That heart shall dwell unknown,
Remote and quiet and content in Thee:
Yet none the less through *it*,
Through that weak, solitary, foolish heart,
Thy Will of love to save mankind
Shall have been done:

O Father, Father,
Here is all my heart, my mind, my will
For Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

HERE in the dim mysterious forest,
Sit we silent an hour,
And live.

At first, our minds wander afar:
The call of the wood-dove,
The sonorous hum of the insects,
The merry clamour of parrots,
The sough of the wind in the trees,
Like the steady beating of waves on a rock-bound coast:
All the thousand voices of forest-life
Entice us afield and away.

But soon,
The spell of the forest-silence falls on our spirit,
And in long deep draughts
We drink in its benediction,
And live.

We become,
Not these diverse creatures of body and mind,
Of fickle impulse and fevered action,
But living souls in the living world
Of the Living God.

We put off death,
We put on life,
We behold the Truth:

In bliss beyond words
Our souls are joined unto Him,
And in Him to each other.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THE Joy of Thy heaven dwells in our hearts to-day,
O humble King of all worlds:
We hear—and hearing are ravished with delight—
Thy secret harmony,
The swing and lilt of that strong melody
Whereby the stars are ruled,
Whereby the planets circle in their right array,
Whereby the sacred dance of night and day,
Of summer, winter, life and death,
Is modulated duly
To the rhythm of thy Will.

We hear, from afar—
Yet clear and keen as the cry of the night-bird from the
sleeping forest—
The song of Thine eternal triumph,
The song of Joy unspeakable and past belief,
The song of those who dwell for ever,
Thy work on earth well done,
In blissful union with Thyself.

Forty-third Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

IN our weakness this day be strong,
O living, triumphant Christ:
Be strong to shine through our dulness and gloom:
Be strong to transform, by Thine own holy life,
Our gross and hateful infirmity:
Be strong to drive, through these feeble and fickle wills,
Thy purposes forward, to work out Thine iron unflagging
will
Of goodness and grace to mankind.

Be strong to beat down the beast
In ourselves and the men around us:
Be strong to get conquest of sin,
To bring in Thy Kingdom:

Be strong through us, even through us,
To bring love and joy to the world—
That eternal love, that undying joy,
Which can wait and suffer and save to the utmost.

Be strong, O Christ, be strong
In our hearts, our lives, this day,
For we give them to Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ACROSS the broad-bosomed lake
Steadily blows the brave west wind,
Damp and cool and delicious,
Scented with blossoms afar,
For the Rains are with us at last.

The clouds, huge toppling galleons, radiant-sailed,
One close-chasing another, in silent and stately array,
Swiftly fare through the billowy sea of the wind-swept
heavens.

The waves on the shore
Plash with a musical call:
Behind on the tree-tops the birds
In a chattering conclave gather their ranks for the night.

The frogs in the reeds
Already are tuning their rollicking chorus:
And all of this forest-world is gleeful and blest
In coolness and moisture and life
After scorching and shrivelling death.

So into the flashing delight of the water
We slip for a long lazy swim,
As beneficent darkness falls,
And the golden sheen of the sunset dies on the ripples.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THIS day of leisure and rest
We will fare forth together, at last, to our forest-lake:
There to forget, for a while,
Our toil, with its burden of failure and pain:

There to remember
That God gives us life and delight ever new,
With the forest for shade,
And the water for coolness and mirth,
And the whole wild world for the joy and the rest of our
souls.

Forty-fourth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FATHER,

We thank Thee that dark and uncertain is our future,
Because, in darkness and doubt,
We must cling more closely to Thee.

Father,

We thank Thee that there will be pain,
Because through pain we are forced to clutch at Thy
hand.

Father,

We thank Thee that there will be loneliness,
Because in loneliness Thou art more surely our Friend.

Father,

We thank Thee that there shall be death,
Because dying we come unto Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

HERE, in the forest-dawn,
Whilst around me is wrought
Thy miracle,
Lord,
Of a new-born day:
Here, midst the quiet trees,
Where nought is heard save the drowsy note of a waken-
ing bird:

Here, in the holy silence and strength of dawn,
Alone on the hill-top,
I render my soul unto Thee,
O my God.

Brief is man's life,
Set between darkness and darkness,
Yet long enough is man's life to know Thee,
O generous-hearted,
O tender-hearted,
O loyal and loving God.

Here, in the silence of dawn,
I worship, I drink in Thy life,
Dear, great-hearted Father and Friend,
Who canst love even me:

Make me Thy man,
And use me to-day for Thy Kingdom.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

FENCED straitly about by eternity,
Day after day we snatch, if we may,
Precarious life from the clutch of the grave.

What of it then,
What worth in it all—
The striving, the tears, the despair,
The weariness, labour and pain?

Just this, that day after day,
Snatched thus from the grave,
Thus fought for and won from the empire of death,
Is one more marvellous chance,
One golden and beautiful chance,
To love and be loved,
And to quaff therein the wine of eternal life.

Forty-fifth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

FATHER,

Our hearts are opened to Thee this new morning
As the flowers to the sun.

Shine in these hearts to-day
With grace creative.

May Thy splendour of love
Be incarnate in us, a little,
To save and redeem.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

DARK waves on an iron-bound coast,
Huge, menacing,
Omnipotent in irresistible advance:
Yet each shall be shattered at last to silvery spray on the
rocks.

The desert land,
Blackened and scorched by the fierceness of summer,
A horror of brazen glare, and famine, and death:
Yet at last the Rains shall come, and that land shall be
green and shall live.

A long black night of the Rains,
No vestige of stars or of moon,
The earth close-veiled in the low-flying clouds:
Yet at last, sodden, belated, cometh the dawn.

The night of despair,
Of weariness past all telling,
Of heartache, loneliness, tears:
Yet at the last God giveth joy.

Long, and dreary, and bitter,
Is Thine anguish, O God, in creation:
Long and hard
Is the building of Thy Kingdom:
Yet at the last Thou shalt triumph.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

SWEET and joyful and dear
Beyond all else on Thy earth
Is the home Thou hast given,
O Father.

We thank Thee this day for the Fortress,
Wherein, from the strife of the world,
We have refuge with Thee, and comfort for grief.

We thank Thee that here in the morning
Together Thy children may kneel at Thy knee,
To gain from Thyself, our Lover and King,
All lovely and gracious gifts, and the strength that we
need for Thy service.

Forty-sixth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

No words are there for Thy beauty,
O thou Joy of our souls:
No words are there for Thy love,
For the friendship divine that sustains us
When we totter and fall in our weakness:
For the sweet assurance of Thy care,
Guiding our faltering steps through the night and the
storm.

O Master and Brother and Friend,
Delight and Peace of our souls,
We would live this day with Thyself:
We would feel Thee and know Thee within us,
Empowering, transforming, glorifying,
Making of our contemptible meanness
A temple meet for Thine own indwelling.

Be King in us, use us, send us whither Thou wilt:
But hold us and love us Thyself.

We thirst—we perish of thirsting—for Thyself;
Have mercy upon us, and dwell with us, even with us,
this day.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

FAR have we come to-day through the forest,
Crushed down by the sun of May—
Even now, in the evening,
He scorches and shrivels and sears.

At the forest-hamlets the starving,
Gaunt, disease-stricken, naked,
Everywhere clamour around us,
Beseeching the aid—poor aid—that we bring.

Now at last, as the darkness falls,
Down-dropping from jungle-clad hills,
Where our guides go unwilling for fear of the tiger,
We reach Nágdon.

Black-dark are its narrow lanes;
For the night has fallen, sudden and swift.

We wearily stumble along, past the grass-built huts,
Each lit by its tiny and flickering wick.

At last we come down to our camp—
A mighty tree at the edge of the village;
Beyond it, the jungle again:
Beneath it, two cots and a crowd of the starving.

They have travelled from far, even cripples and blind,
When they heard of our coming:
All must be talked to and helped e'er we eat.

Then at last we may lie at our ease,
Gazing up through the leaves to the quiet stars,
And sleep awhile, if the hot wind falls:
But at earliest down we must up and away.

THE SACRAMENT & HOME LIFE

To those that trust Him,
To those that make even the faintest, feeblest effort to
trust Him,
He granteth their hearts desire:
In ways wonderful and joyful
In ways beyond our comprehension,
But in ways full of tenderness and of love,
He granteth the heart's desire.

O Father, we thank Thee:
No words are there for our thanks,
Only an utter giving of ourselves to Thee:

We thank Thee,
O Father most loving and most tender,
We thank Thee.

Forty-seventh Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

O GENEROUS Giver,
Father, Lover, and Friend:
We bless and praise Thy holy name
For all Thy gracious and most lovely gifts;
But far more than for these
We thank thee for Thyself.

O thou Joy of our souls,
Light of our dark lives,
Perpetual Solace and Delight,
There is nought in heaven or earth that we desire beside
Thyself.

Having Thee, we conquer in weakness,
We exult in distresses,
Our lives are filled with music and laughter;
But without Thee,
We perish in despair.

Oh, Brother, strong Comrade,
Our hearts cleave unto Thee this day.
Be with us: stretch out Thy strong hand:
Lift us out of ourselves,
Safe to the heaven of Thy companionship.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

THE TENT-DOOR

THROUGH the wild and exultant flame of our fire
Is fitfully seen the high black wall of the mountain,
Its edge pine-fringed,

Its summit a steely point on the stars:

Beneath, the snow-swollen torrents roar
Rending the night with their solemn thunder:

Around us, the sombre pine-stems
Are dyed to a dull red glow in the flames,
And afar, through the long-fingered branches,
The high snows gleam.

An owl hoots sudden o'erhead.

From far up the cliff an answer returns.

The night is awake, the darkness ablaze,
With the presence and splendour of God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THOU art our Peace,

Our Home:

When we wander away from Thy love,
Our souls are lonely, harrassed, distraught,
Weighed down by a hopeless grief;

But when we return unto Thee

We have hope, and a quiet joy

In all things lovely and simple and fair.

Keep us, O keep us, Father,

Close and content in our Home.

Forty-eighth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

So little and weak am I,
O Father:
So great and so strong art Thou:
Yet Thou lovest me,
Thou lovest even me,
Even me, with all my folly and sin,
For myself Thou lovest:

Even in me, in me,
O Father and Lover divine,
Thou canst see, canst feel,
Something that calleth forth, even to death,
Thine eternal love, and fixeth it firm,
In all its power and fulness,
Upon me, even on me.

O Father, Father, . . .
I thank Thee:
With all my puny irresolute nature
I love Thee, desire to be Thine,
Yearn to give back unto Thee
Something of all that I owe,
Ache with heart-felt longing to serve Thee, to work
for Thy Kingdom:

Father,
Dear glorious Father,
I love Thee.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

IN the rich joyous heart of the Indian night,
With the moon's white glamour quiet and clear overhead,
And the forest, dim-stretching,
Instinct and alive with mysterious silence:

When each tree
Is a fountain of shimmering fairylike beauty under the
 moon,
When each faint sound—
A breaking twig, the croon of a sleepy bird—
Is a secret voice and a call:

When a man's sluggish heart is exalted within him,
When fifty dull generations fall swiftly away,
And he hears, as his far-off fathers heard,
Strong, compelling, bewitching,
The Call of the Wild:

Then be Thou by our side,
As we pass from glade unto secret glade
Through the magical sheen of the moonlight
And the black-dark caverns of shadow:

Be Thou by our side,
As we pass from our cosy lamp-lit tent
Into the wild new world of the forest-night,
Like souls, wondrously blest,
That fare forth together,
Away from this homely world of men—
But with Thee by their side—
Through the dim and radiant mysteries of death.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

For Thy great gift, O Father,
We thank Thee to-day—
The gift of Silence:

For the rich, warm, generous Silence
We thank Thee,
Wherein our souls,
Stunted and shrivelled and starved
In the arid desert of everyday hurry and strain,
May rest, and quietly grow, and expand
Upward to Thee.

For the low sweet tones of Thy love,
We thank Thee,
Thy love that speaketh in silence
With comfort and healing and grace,
With assurance of life eternal,
And of union with Thee.

For Thine own great heart of love
We thank Thee,
Plain felt in the gracious Silence—
That heart of love
Sustaining the uttermost worlds,
Yet sharing its life divine
With each of us here,
Binding us, now and for ever,
Close to Thyself.

Forty-ninth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

WITHOUT Thee,
We are mariners wrecked in mid-ocean
Adrift on a wave-washed raft:
One by one we loosen our hold,
Fall back, and are swiftly engulfed.

Without Thee,
Like miners entombed
We wait in fevered despair,
Watching the water's remorseless rise, till we die.

Death has his hand on our throat,
Nought can save us at last from that sure close grasp
His triumph draws steadily nigh.

Yet Thou, O our God,
Hast been through with it too:
Thou hast suffered the worst and been strong:
Thou, too, hast been swept from the raft:
Thou, too, hast in agony waited and watched
As the slow waters rose inch by inch:
Thou, too, hast been stifled at last in the dark.

Be with us, our God,
Make us strong with Thy strength,
Unafraid at the last with Thy courage.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

FAIR is Thy world, O Father,
In the radiant dawn:

Fair and joyful and goodly to see
Is the face of Thy world:

In the silence we raise unto Thee,
A secret voice of thanksgiving.

Father, Thy goodness, Thy love
Fill all things, and shine in splendour
From wakening flowers, and forest, and distant hills:

Thy goodness, Thy love,
Are close round our hearts,
Are warm and tender and sweet round our hearts.

Father, dear Father,
Praised be Thy name, praised be Thy name this day,
In all Thy world
And in this poor sordid wasted life of mine.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

THY mercy, O God,
Is stronger than death:
Thy love endures
Eternally.

We have only to open our heart unto Thee,
Waiting thus silent for Thee in the silent forest,
And our souls shall live,
Shall expand, shall know with an inner ineffable gladness,
The beauty that never fades,
The freedom that never decays,
The love that endures for ever,
The Will, Thy Will, that would give and give
Its best, to all ages,
For those that are bound and loveless and lost:

O teach us to wait, and to listen, and know
Thine own great tender, omnipotent love.

Fiftieth Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

AROUND us is infinity,
And we are nothing.

Star beyond star:
Universe beyond universe,
Unending for ever:

A million years to the making of man,
A thousand million to the making of the rocks:
We are beset, this side and that, by eternity:

Yet what of it all,
This infinite space, this infinite time?
Kings are we of it all,
For, O King of it all, we love Thee, Who art Love:
And our hearts are at rest in Thyself
Who art more than it all,
In Whom all time, all space, are summed up,
One radiant thought of Thy mind,
One urge of Thy love, one pulse of Thy life,
That life which even through us
Triumphantly beats, destroying death and necessity.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

BLACK trees,
The fierce red glow of distant torches,
The moon, parting the flying clouds to peep through,
Water like molten night,
Smooth as a cat's fur,
Soft as a child's cheek,
Warm and close as a kiss;

Against the faint sheen of the sky
A figure, dimly discerned:
Outward it leaps, and down, down,
To cleave, with scarcely a ripple,
The lake's dark, resonant surface.

Then the motion of it—
The long steady drive through that ebon mirror:
The slow thrust and recover,
With bladed hands:
The swift flash as we dive
Down from dimness to blackness,
Down from irresponsible air
To the warm embrace of the water:

Thus to swim, in the forest, together, at night,
Is to live indeed,
To be drunken and drugged
With the joy of living,
To quaff, and in long deep draughts,
God's sacrament of delight.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

MAKE us, O Father, Thine own:
Thou knowest our weakness and shame:
Thou seest the worst in our lives:
Nought is hid from Thy sight.

Just as we are we come, like children straight to their
mother,
Holding their grimy and tear-stained faces
Trustfully up for her kiss:

Thanks be to Thee,
Thou wilt never rebuff us.

Fifty-first Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

Not alone in the darkness of grief do we need Thee,
Not alone in the splendour of joy,
Not alone in the wild open-air would we thrill to Thy
presence,
Not there alone would we know ourselves Thine;

But here in the dull monotonous round,
Here in the steady rhythm of everyday work
Here where so little uplifts and so much degrades and
oppresses,
Here above all do we need Thee, our God.

Here above all be our Rock and our Fortress,
Silent and strong in the heart of the hurry and strife:
Here in the clamour vouchsafe us the grace of Thy
presence,
Here in the deadness and gloom enkindle our hearts by
Thy touch.

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

ACROSS the dark rocks, dripping and seaweed-fringed,
The long slow breakers tumble and roar,
Flinging on high their broken life,
Fire-flecked, in masses of silvery spray.

Overhead, as the last of the daylight dies,
Laughs and rejoices the moon, with a wild and magical
joy:
And one great star, her attendant,
Solemnly waits on her mirth.

Into the warm caress of the Indian Ocean
Slowly we glide:
A few strong resolute strokes, and we float,
Firm held in the grasp of the good salt water,
Gently lifted and swung in a safe cool cradle,
As each smooth roller marches in pride to its doom.

Around us flashes and sparkles the swift phosphorescence:
In a thousand shimmering facets the velvety waters
Gleam with the dazzling sheen of the moon.

O moments divine and eternal,
Perfection of wild unearthly beauty in sea and in sky,
Perfection of silky delight in the touch of the ripples,
Perfection of faery joy in the glamour of moonlit waters:

The thanks of our hearts unto Thee,
O God, Who hast given it all,
Who art known in it all.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

For laughter
God's name be praised:
For cheery companionship,
For old recollections revived
Of labours and joys and dangers gone by.

For the humour, the genial good-will,
Of everyday friendship,
God's name be praised.

For music
God's name be praised,
Music that lifts a man's heart from earth
And flings wide the portal of heaven:

And for song,
The gracious flower of perfect song,
God's name be mightily praised.

Fifty-second Week

THE SACRAMENT OF SONSHIP

OH that men might desire to find Thee,
Why should they live these empty and meaningless lives?
Why are they dumbly and feebly content
With these follies that pass and are gone?

Do they not know that a few brief years
Shall sweep from the earth every soul that is sojourning
here,
Shall plunge to oblivion themselves,
Their hopes and their strivings, for ever?

Do they not know that their passion, their pride,
Their anguish and joy,
Shall vanish like smoke from a fire burnt out,
Shall be melted like snow on the foot-hills in May,
Shall be scattered and fly like a mist?

Do they not know, in their souls,
That they are not fit prey for the grave,
That to perish in darkness unseen is not destined for man,
That God calls him forth unto life out of death?

Do they not know that in Thee,
And only in Thee,
In the grasp of their Lover and God,
Is the power to bear them securely, through death with
its horror of night,
To the endless joy of His day,
To the Home He has made,
To immortal youth in Himself?

THE SACRAMENT OF NATURE

DEEP and silent and cool as a broad still tree-shadowed
river

Is the peace of Thy presence, Thou Rest of our souls.

From the thousand problems of this our hurrying life
We turn, with silent joy, to plunge in Thee,
To steep our souls in Thy quiet depths,
Where no clamour of earth disturbs our perfect content.

Thou art our Home and our Refuge;
In Thee we are safe and at peace:
Ever, in the din and hurry of the world
We know that Thou art near,
We know that close at hand—closer far than our own
little life—
Floweth that silent river of Thy presence and love.

In a moment we may be with Thee and in Thee,
In a moment be surrounded and soaked in Thy peace:
In a moment, as this loud world clangs around us,
We may rest secure in the bliss of Thine eternity.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOME LIFE

OUT of the mire of sin and despair,
Out of the black abyss of the soul's dark night,
He guides us safe to His home.

Nought spares He Himself for our saving,
He bears the full brunt of the storm,
Dauntless He suffers the shame and the wounds.

O Saviour, we cannot reward Thee,
No guerdon of praise can we bring,
We are shamefast and voiceless before Thee.

Only, our hearts exult at Thy presence,
Our Hero, our Saviour, our God,
Who art Soul of all worlds,
And the Joy of these narrow hearts.

Envoi

How shall men stablish their rights?
How shall they combat the wrongs, black as night,
That crush down their lives in despair?
How shall they win, for the future,
That fuller and ampler life,
That radiant freedom, that joy,
Which now so sorely they lack?
How shall the Kingdom be built
Where none is oppressed or despised,
Where all men are brothers, and equal, and free?

We know not, O Master:—
This only we know,
We must follow Thy way, by Thy grace:
For over the passions and plottings of men,
As swiftly the centuries glide,
There looms for us, silent, compelling, Thy Cross.
All we know is Thy generous love,
Which recked not of insult and wrong to itself,
Nor of shame and despair:
Which forgave, and trusted, and toiled, to the dark
 bitter end
In humility, poverty, pain:
Which strove for the poor and the slave,
Forgetting itself:
Which sought not its own,
Neither justice, nor freedom, nor rights:
But laboured and died,
And, dying, forgave all the blackness of wrong it had
 borne;

Yet, so dying, built by its death
A Kingdom immortal of freedom and hope,
Wherein we, even we, may abide.

Teach us to work for that Kingdom,
O Master divine,
To work for its amplest coming on earth,
To tell men Thy goodness, Thy Love:
So that none may be ground in injustice and shame,
But all men be brothers, and equal, and free,
Because they know Thee,
Their Captain, their Saviour, their King,
Because they rejoice in Thy will and Thy way,
Which is freedom and friendship and hope.

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